

My name is Patricio Espinoza, I'm an independent Media Specialist, and a four time Emmy award winning Journalist. I have lived and worked in San Antonio, Houston and South Texas for over 13 years. My work, as a television network news producer, national correspondent, news anchor, and news director have been featured by most major national networks, both in English language and Spanish, including ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, PBS, NPR, Telemundo, Univision, Court-TV and A&E among others.

The subject on LOCALISM or the lack of it, is of great importance to communities like San Antonio.

LOCALISM or the lack of it, at first look, is reflected in the lack of diversity in local newsrooms. In a 65% plus Hispanic market like San Antonio, some local stations are yet to reflect such diversity on-air. Diversity that should not be based on the color of the skin or surnames, but rather on people whose work "on-air" clearly represents, understands and reflects a bi-cultural, bi-lingual city like San Antonio, Texas.

The lack of LOCALISM, therefore, is also reflected in the local stations news products. In cities like San Antonio, Spanish language stations are a key component of protecting LOCALISM, particularly in bilingual bi-cultural communities like San Antonio.

As the founding News Director for Telemundo, KVDA in San Antonio, Texas, as well as Telemundo's Network News Texas Bureau, I'm sorry to report that 18 years later, today both sources of local news no longer exist. In 2005, in a misguided consolidation effort by Telemundo, owned and operated by NBC, they closed down all local newsrooms in all of their stations including San Antonio, Houston and Dallas, and replaced them with a hub news center in Dallas, Texas. Although each market was in fact left with a local reporter, no argument can justify one reporter covering and generating local news for a city of the size of San Antonio. A clear proof of this are other stations in the market that operate with a significant larger staff over 50 or 100 people in order to deliver San Antonio's local news.

The result of closing local news operations is an out of town generated newscast which, in San Antonio's case, within 30 minutes, may or may not include any San Antonio news, and if so, it may only be anywhere between 30 seconds to 2 minutes inclusion within a 30 minute "local" newscast. The FCC and its Localism Task Force should examine and issue recommendations, or better yet, demand on behalf of the people of San Antonio, Houston and Dallas and other cities in country also affected including Phoenix and San Francisco, the production of LOCAL NEWS that serves OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES and LOCAL INTERESTS not a "piped in" news product with no connection whatsoever to the needs, challenges, and triumphs for the people of San Antonio, Texas. What would happen in the case of a LOCAL NATURAL DISASTER... would a Dallas newsroom serve well the local San Antonio community, the local Phoenix community, the local San Francisco community?

The FCC Localism Task Force should also address the state of local news at Spanish language stations in San Antonio and around the country. Spanish local news quality has hardly changed in the last 25 years. The same people, the same managers, the same product continues to monopolize and underserve the local needs. Station's boost their local presence with "7 hours of weekly news programming." The fact is quantity does not necessarily mean quality. In fact further misguided consolidation efforts in 2005 left Univision San Antonio, Houston and Dallas stations with skeleton local newsrooms, doing as little as possible, with as limited resources as possible, for as little as possible resulting, without a doubt, in a tremendous disadvantage to be informed of local news for Spanish speaking members of communities like San Antonio.

Further proof of the lack of localism is KXLN in Houston's coverage in 2005, or lack of, during the Katrina and Rita hurricanes. While KTMD, Telemundo Houston and Univision radio -with very limited-resources managed to do their best and serve their community at a time of great emergency need... Univision KXLN in Houston grounded its news crews, and severely hindered the station's ability to do what its FCC license requires: TO SERVE THE PUBLIC. In fact, if you were a Spanish speaking resident of Houston, at that emergency time, you

were not able to turn to and count on the most powerful Spanish language news outlet in Houston. That day, when the city of Houston had to evacuate over one million residents, for emergency information and breaking news, the Spanish speaking people of Houston faced its greatest emergency but if you spoke Spanish... God help you. Journalists at KXLN certainly couldn't.

And so, the fact remains and the FCC Local Task Force should investigate broadcast corporations and local television stations whose local news efforts clearly reflects a LACK OF LOCAL INTEREST, A LACK OF LOCALISM. Compared to English affiliates, Spanish language stations in general offer an inferior news product that at best lacks the ability to accurately, responsibly, and ethically informs Spanish speaking communities like San Antonio.

Spanish language managers argue their local news resources only reflect station's sales and income. However, their salary roster clearly reflects the contrary. High salaries and resources for management, sales and administrators while under market salaries, under-staffed and under equipped newsrooms ran, in some cases, under qualified news managers, whose agenda is the corporation, not the people, and the FCC license the station holds. In comparison to the market size they serve, these stations are severely under-staffed, under-managed, and under-funded. As 20 year news veteran and four time Emmy award winning Journalist, I will further argue that all under serving local news only reflects a lack of commitment, a lack of local interest, a lack of LOCALISM.